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AUTHOR Lewis, Elaine
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ABSTRACT

This teaching guide presents objectives, activities, pre and posttests, and handouts to help sixth grade classroom teachers as they develop and implement educational programs about Africa. The major purpose is to help students develop positive attitudes toward other cultures, particularly African cultures. Specific objectives are to help students understand, appreciate, and respect African lifestyles and various African art forms and learn basic facts about the African continent. Developed at an interdisciplinary summer workshop for teachers on African curriculum development, the instructional guide is intended as the basis of a six-week minicourse. The guide is presented in four major sections. Section I offers test questions and outlines student assignments involving task cards and scrapbooks. Section II explains how students can analyze cultural material, with particular regard to bias and cultural context. Sections III and IV focus on the Mandingo people of Ghana and the Igbo people of Nigeria. Topics discussed include housing, family and kinship, plants and animals, clothing, markets, masks, music and dance, naming ceremonies, folktales, and systems of government. For each topic, information is presented on materials, activities, and procedures. Students are involved in a variety of activities including map and globe work, listening to music, viewing films and slide shows, discussing issues in class, and playing African games. The final section examines geography of the African continent. Students are directed to work with maps and globes, read and discuss textbook assignments, and make travel posters. (DB)

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"AFRICAN UNIT"

An Instructional Unit for Sixth Grade

by

Elaine Lewis
Ott Elementary School
Independence, Missouri

This teaching unit on Africa was developed as part of an interdisciplinary workshop project in African curriculum development held on the University of Illinois' Urbana-Champaign campus in the summer of 1977. The workshop project, which was funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities, was carried out from 1977-80 and was integrated into an on-going program of outreach services offered to teachers nationwide. For further information on teaching aids available through outreach services, contact:

Outreach Director
African Studies Program
1208 West California, #101
Urbana, Illinois 61801

SP 012 689

AFRICAN UNIT

The purpose of this unit is to develop positive attitudes toward other cultures and specifically African cultures.

The general objectives:

- The student will respect African lifestyles as the response of African people to their environment.

- The student will appreciate various African art forms.

- The student will understand basic facts about the continent.

The following basic content areas will be represented in this study:

Art - African art forms featuring a study of masks and designs - their mechanics and meanings.

English - African literature, proverbs and some African language forms.

Geography - The physical features of the continent, the climate and vegetation regions of the continent, the political divisions of Africa and the distribution of groups of peoples on the continent.

Social Studies - The family, kinship roles, village organizations, types of education, and community responsibilities.

Science - The fauna and foliage of portions of the continent, the climate, and tools.

The approach will be a comparison of two different peoples: the Igbo and the Mandingo. The culminating unit will pull together the information from these two units into a study of the entire continent working with map study skills.

The unit is for sixth grade for six weeks.

AFRICAN UNIT OUTLINE

I. Pretest

II. Nacirema Study

III. Mandingo People using the Dark Child by C. Lay as a basis.

- A. Housing
- B. Family and kinship
- C. Plants and Animals
- D. Clothing
- E. Markets
- F. Masks, music and dance
- G. Naming Ceremony
- H. Folktales

IV. The Igbo People using Okolo of Nigeria by Peter Buckley and selected readings from Things Fall Apart by Chinua Achebe as a study basis.

- A. Housing
- B. Family and kinship
- C. Plants and Animals
- D. Clothing
- E. Markets
- F. Masks, music and dance
- G. System of Government

V. Geography of the African continent.

- A. Physical features and landforms
- B. Climate regions
- C. Vegetation regions
- D. Minerals
- E. Political division
- F. Geographical and political vocabulary

TASK CARDS

Each student will be expected to complete at least five task cards for each group studied. The completed work will be part of the scrapbook for the unit.

The task cards will focus on:

Religious beliefs

Justice systems

Marriage customs

Currency

Colonial experience

Work expected of children

Musical instruments

Soil

Transportation

Minerals

Agricultural products

Animals

SCRAPBOOK

Each student will develop a scrapbook. It will include classroom projects and individual work from task cards and special assignments.

Assignments for the scrapbook:

1. Using symbols with meaning like the adinkra patterns design a cover for the book.

2. From the books on the interest table or the bibliography from the Mid-Continent Public library select a book about some person in Africa. After you read this book make a written report for your scrapbook, include author, title, pages and the main ideas of the book.

3. The task cards on the interest table will help you forus on areas of the different cultures. Choose the five that interest you the most. As you complete the work put it in your scrapbook.

All vocabulary sheets and work sheets are to be kept in your scrapbook.

Put color to your book by adding artwork and any magazine materials you can legitimately acquire.

Lesson One - Pre-test for Prior Knowledge

This will be an assessment of the students' knowledge and impressions of Africa and its people to be used as a guide in the selection of topics and objectives to be emphasized.

The student will be given the same test at the end of the study to determine if his/her impressions of Africa have changed.

INTEREST APPROACH

Explain that the pre-test is to be a guide for me in selecting information to be taught on Africa based on what they already understand and what they would like to know.

PROCEDURE

The students are to complete the following questions:

1. Africa is---
2. African people are--
3. When I hear the word Africa I think of --
4. Africans probably think America is--
5. Africans probably think Americans are--
6. Some things I know about Africa are--
7. I would like to go to Africa because--

Lesson Two - Nacirema Study

The objective is to lead students to identify this type of material as biased: to have them read about customs and procedures that they have always taken as normal in a context which makes them appear simple-minded cruel and outlandish.

MATERIALS

1. Duplicated copies of "Body Ritual Among the Nacirema". (See bibliography)

INTEREST APPROACH

Tell the students that the Nacerima are an interesting culture that we will discuss in detail after reading the article.

PROCEDURE

After the students have read the article silently, the class will read it orally together before any discussion. Put the comprehension questions on the board. (See next page.)
PART 1. Discussion

a. Open the lesson by asking for one or two-word descriptions of the Nacirema people. (Primitive, magical, etc. can be expected.)

b. Write the class responses on the board. Then ask:

1) Who are the Nacirema?
2) Where do they live?

If you get answers like "us" or "Americans" go on to parts 3 or 4.
If you get answers like "a primitive tribe someplace" go on to part 2.

PART 2.

a. Read paragraph #9 and ask the students if they could ever imagine themselves visiting a holy mouth man.

b. If they haven't caught on, read paragraphs 4, 5, 6 and ask them if they can see any sensible uses for the charm box or fount.

c. If they still haven't caught on, paraphrase paragraph #9 out loud while they read it silently. Replace "mouth-rite," "holy mouth man", and magical materials" with the common American names for these as you read on.

Part 3

a. When the class has discovered the Nacirema are really Americans, have the students read the article silently and after each paragraph ask a student what is being described.

b. As the students explain what Miner, the author, is describing, list the words which Miner uses and compare them with the items the students come up with. For example: charms, curative potions, medicine

Part 4

Ask your students why they think Miner wrote the article. Possible answers:

1. To satirize American culture.
2. To show how loaded words can affect the reader's preceptions.
3. To show that cultures can be different without being inferior.

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Who are the Nacirema?
2. What is the fundamental belief underlying their whole philosophy?
3. How do we know their shrines are important to them?
4. What does a Holy Mouth Man do?
5. Are the Nacerima, in your opinion, at a higher or lower "stage of civilization"?

Lesson Three - The Mandingo

The time period on the first part of the study of Africa will be unusual. It will be the first day of school that normally has a large amount of unstructured time.

MATERIALS

1. Tape of Mandingo music.
2. Camara Laye, The Dark Child.
3. Slides of Mandingo housing, the savannah, "Children of East and West Africa." (See bibliography)
4. Slide projector
5. Tape recorder

INTEREST APPROACH

The music is to be playing as the students enter the room. Tell the students that it is the music of the Mandingo people, show them on the map the areas where the Mandingo live. Print a card that says Mandingo and tape to the map at the time the area is located.

PROCEDURE

Read the first chapter of The Dark Child. Open discussion.

Discuss, using slides of the Mandingo housing, the different building structures that the peoples might live in and the relationship of the family structure and the housing.

Show the slides of the children of East and West Africa. How are they the same as you and how are they different?

Discuss the role of the snake and the father, the father and son, and the mother and son. from Chapter One of the Dark Child.

Ask the students what type of land area they think would be in this area--and what type of animal and plant life it would have. Use slides typical of the savannah area.

Read Chapter Two of Dark Child.

The Savannah Zone of Nigeria and Guinea

The relative poverty of its soil probably means that this zone will never be a prime agricultural region.

This is a zone of woodland mixed with tall grasses. It is a transitional belt where rainfall averages forty to sixty inches per year and there are four to five months with less than one inch of rain. Broad-leafed deciduous trees rising as high as forty feet are interspersed with long grasses and shrubs. As in most savannah regions of Africa, much of this zone is burned year after year, for a variety of reasons, or accidentally. Farmers may light fires to clear land or to improve the soil with ash. Hunters may use fire to drive the game into traps.

(See page 16, Africa, by William D. Allen.)

Animals of the Mandingo.

Cattle, horses, goats, sheep

Main crops

Rice, millet, sorghum, peanuts

Lesson Four - The Mandingo

This lesson will explore the food and clothing of the Mandingo.

MATERIALS

1. Food: "African Recipes" - peanuts in shell, fried plantain, and rice cake, mangoes (see bibliography).
2. Camera Laye, The Dark Child.
3. Slide set: "West African Dress" - 40 slides, "Rice Farming" - 54 slides (See bibliography).
4. Piece of tie-dyed cloth one yard by three yards.
5. Paper plates
6. Slide projector

INTEREST APPROACH

The food will be in large bowls on a rug in the center of the room. The students will sit in a circle around the room eating while the third chapter of Dark Child is read.

PROCEDURE

Have the students sit in a circle on the rug. Have the oldest male child play the part of the father putting a portion of food on a paper plate for each student.

Read the third and fourth chapters of Dark Child.

Talk about the type of foods available to the Mandingo. Show a few slides from Rice Farming in Sierra Leone.

Talk about the type of clothing one would expect to find taking into consideration their climate and environment.

Show slide set West African Dress.

Ask students to bring a t-shirt and/or a handkerchief to tie-dye in next lesson.

Lesson Five - The Mandingo

This will be an art lesson exploring the designs of material and particularly tie-dying.

MATERIALS

1. Rit dyes and vinegar
2. Large buckets
3. Plenty of newspapers
4. Slide set "Cloth-making in Sierra Leone"- 32 slides (see bibliography)
5. Slide projector
6. Garbage sacks

PROCEDURE

Show and discuss the slide set on cloth making

Have the students suggest ways to fold and tie the cloth.

The students will tie their cloth.

Dip the materials into the color. Set it aside to dry.

Read chapters five and six of Dark Child.

Lesson 6

Folktales - Koranko and Igbo

The student will know the values of the Koranko society of Sierra Leone and Guinea and the values of the Igbo society. The student will observe that the values of the Koranko, who are similar to the Mandingo, the Igbo and his own are very similar.

Materials

1. Folktales from resource unit: "Folk Tales From Sierra Leone" by Momodu Kargbo and "Nigerian Folktales" told by Peter Asun. (see bibliography)
2. Candle

INTEREST APPROACH

Draw the blinds. The students sit on the rug. Light a candle. The folktales are entertainment for the evening, never to be told while the sun shines and work can be done.

PROCEDURE

Read the first folktale. Ask questions such as:

1. What did the story mean?
2. Is there a lesson for you in this story?

Read the second folktale. Repeat the questions.

The first two folktales will be Koranko or Mandingo. The next folk tale will be from the Igbo of Nigeria.

Read a third folktale and ask questions about its meaning.

The students will observe that the morales of the folktales are very similar and can be associated with folktales from our culture. The students will observe that standards of conduct and behavior valued are similar in all three cultures.

Lesson Seven THE IGBO

The student will understand the Igbo people are human beings just like themselves.

MATERIALS

1. Okolo of Nigeria by Peter Buckley
2. Things Fall Apart by Chinua Achebe
3. "The Kola Nut in Traditional Igbo Society of Nigeria," handout available from the African Studies Program of the University of Illinois. (see bibliography)

INTEREST APPROACH

The large pictures of the Igbo people, dwellings and forest area will be put up. Particularly the picture of Okolo and his friends with their books.

PROCEDURE

Read Chapter 1 of Okolo of Nigeria which is descriptive of a twelve year old in the forest of Nigeria; it tells of his desires, his friends, his responsibilities and his fears.

Next read Chapter 1 of "Things Fall Apart" which tells of human failings and frustrations as well as hard work. It speaks of the qualities the Igbo value and the social structure of their village.

Because the kola nut is so significant, read again the part where the kola nut is offered and discuss its significance. Do we have a similar custom?

What do the students see about Okolo that is similar to boys they know? What do they see that is different?

What do they see in Okonkwo and his father that is the same in father-son relationships in our culture? How is their culture different?

Lesson Eight

THE IGBO ENVIRONMENT

The student will understand the physical features and climate the Igbo must deal with to establish his/her lifestyle.

MATERIALS

1. Globe and wall map, with the home area of the Ibo marked.
2. Rainfall chart posted showing rainfall amounts by months for the forest area of Nigeria and a comparable chart for Independence, Mo.
3. Palm tree slide set and lecture (see bibliography)
4. Okolo of Nigeria, page 23
5. Things Fall Apart, chapter 2.

INTEREST APPROACH

Pictures of the forest and the people and dwellings in the area. Charts of comparable rainfall amounts during each month of the year put on the board.

PROCEDURE

The last lesson talked about Okolo and his life; the area where he lives is forest.

> The forest surrounded Okolo's village. If the people did not forever fight against it, the forest would grow over the clearing they had made and crust their houses. The forest acted a barrier against the world, but it also gave the people shelter. (p. 23 Okolo of Nigeria)

There are other environmental conditions that affect how people live. Have the students listen for additional natural conditions that are prominent as dramatized in the second chapter of Things Fall Apart: the struggle with the wet and the dry seasons.

What plants do you find in this region?

Discuss the yams.

Show the palm tree slides.

Lesson Nine- Dwelling Places - an art project

Students willmake a forest village to simulate one type of Igbo housing.

MATERIALS

1. Large pictures of urban housing, village housing and compounds.
2. Construction materials: cardboard, cereal boxes(Quaker Oats) colored construction paper, tagboard, markers, tempera paint glue, etc.
3. Slide set on African houses

PROCEDURE

Why do people build dwellings? List reasons on the board.

What determines the shape and size of the dwelling you are going to build? What determines the material you will use?

Show slides of various dwellings in Africa discuss their architecture and the relationship of the dwellings to the family structure. Recall the information gained in Camara Lay and in Achebe about where the children lived, where the father lived, where the mothers lived, where the cooking was done, where the garden is, etc.

Focus on the housing you would build in the forest area of Nigeria.

Design on the chalk board the basic grouping. Make the village large enough that five students working together can put together one family compound: include trees. Later animals and representations of people can be added.

Lesson Ten-
Naming Ceremony

The students will understand that there are several types of names given to an individual depending upon his culture.

MATERIALS

1. Doll
2. Broom

INTEREST APPROACH

Place a notice on the board or give an oral announcement of the birth of a child and the forth-coming naming ceremony; part of the ceremony could be giving the students names also.

PROCEDURE

Ask a few of the students to meet after class. Go over the Koranko naming ceremony with them so they will be prepared to act it out before the class.

List the Koranko names and their meanings on the board. List the Ghanaian day names on the board. Everyone who wants to chose an African name may do so; that name will be lettered and put on the front of his/her desk.

Lesson 11 - African Masks, Day One

The objective of this lesson is to understand the function of the mask in society and realize it's complete only with music and dance.

MATERIALS

1. Slides of the Chi Wara masks
2. Slide projector and tape cassette
3. Drawings and pictures of different masks from African Living Arts, by A. D. Marshall.; "Masks" in Africa, Time-Life; and from Roots of Time "The Arts in Africa"
4. Opaque projector
5. A mask part - either from a mask kit borrowed from the St. Louis Museum, or made from drawings.
6. Duplicate parts of Dancing Masks of Africa by Christine Price.
7. African music
8. Film "Benin Kingship Ritual" available from the African Studies Program of the University of Illinois. (see bibliography)

PROCEDURE Part 1 45 minutes

Show the film; it will give the students a feeling for the total ritual covering - of which a small part is the facial mask. (30 minutes)

Discuss the use of face and body coverings in our society and in other cultures.

Put up drawings of different ritual costumes and discuss their functions

PROCEDURE Part 2 45 minutes

Play African music.

Show slide set on the Chi Wara masks.

Pass out duplicated copies of "The Dancing Masks of Africa" and while it is being read(by a student who has previously read it to himself) show pictures of different masks and costumes using the opague projector.

Discuss ritual costume parts: why they cover the body and how they are made

Ask students to look around and bring materials they can use to make a mask head piece that will represent them.

Lesson 11 - African Masks, Day Two

The objective of this lesson is to put to use the information gained from the previous lesson on masks and masking: to make a mask partially or completely.

MATERIALS

1. Pictures and drawings of masks
2. tag board, staples, glue, magic markers and tempera paint
3. burlap
4. sample mask
5. African music

PROCEDURE

Review the philosophy of the masks: why do people wear them? what do you want your mask to do?

Design the mask remembering the facial covering is only a small part of it--the materials and ideas put on top are important.

Using tag-board cut the facial covering and a strip to be fastened on top to hold the burlap and top materials.

Color and design.

Let the students dance to the African music with their masks on.

Study Chart of Three Peoples: Igbo - Manding - Missourians

ITEM	IGBO	MANDING	MISSOURIAN
Climate and Topography			
Government Systems			
Religious Beliefs			
Colonial Experience			
Food Staples			
Transportation			
Clothing			
Oral Literature			

Lesson Twelve--

Physical Features of Africa

The student will know the land formations, peculiarities, of the African continent.

MATERIAL

1. World map and globe
2. Africa, a textbook by W. D. Allen, pages 10 through 21
3. boards, salt and flour

INTEREST APPROACH

One of the areas where the earths crust has separated and slipped is in Africa. What would cause this to happen? What is the area like today? Could it change again?

PROCEDURE

With the help of the text book maps, discuss the basic land formations in Africa having the students work out explanations of the map information.

Read together and discuss the information in Allen, pages 10 through 21.

On a board with good soft clay over an outline form already drawn work out with students the high ridge areas, the mountains, major river, coastline shapes and lakes.

Assign each student to make his own graphic relief map of Africa at home using a salt-flour receipe (approximately 1 cup flour, 1/2 cup salt, 1/4 cup water). This map is to be painted at home or at school with acrylics.

Lesson Thirteen--

Climate and Vegetation regions of the African continent

The student will know the various climate and vegetation regions and be able to explain some reasons for their present and past status.

MATERIALS

1. Africa, W. D. Allen, pages 22 to 32
2. teacher-made handout of the continent to be marked with vegetation areas.
3. Teacher-made handout of the continent to be marked with annual rainfall to be shown with a color code.
4. Slides to show visual characteristics of each type of area.

INTEREST APPROACH

We have studied different peoples and how differently they lived because of the differences in their environment. What can we show about the different types of growth in Africa and what type of climatic changes affect this growth?

PROCEDURE

Read together the textbook pages 22 to 32.

Using an opaque projector or a transparency have the students work together marking the vegetation areas. Then have them each one do their own vegetation map.

Work together again on the rainfall map until the students realize the close relationship of weather and growth. Have them each one mark with color code the annual rainfall areas.

You could also do a map showing temperature ranges.

Tropic of Cancer
Tropic of Capricorn
AMERICAN
RAIN-FOREST
FORMATION
AFRICAN
RAIN-FOREST
FORMATION
INDO-MALAYAN
RAIN-FOREST
FORMATION
August
February

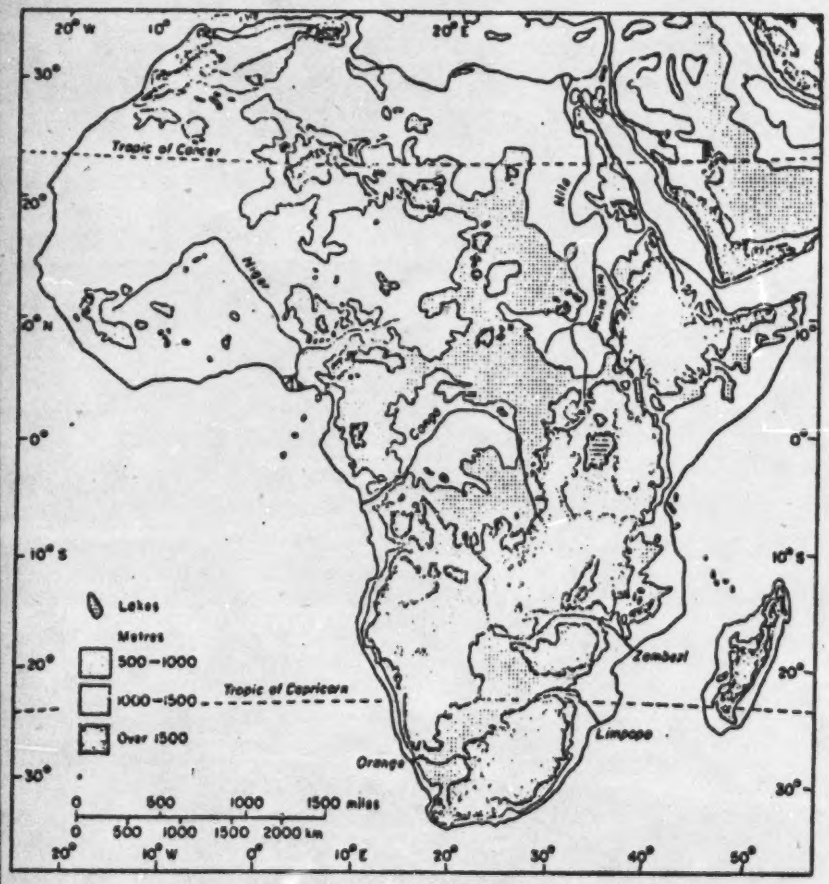


Fig. 6. Map of the high relief of Africa.

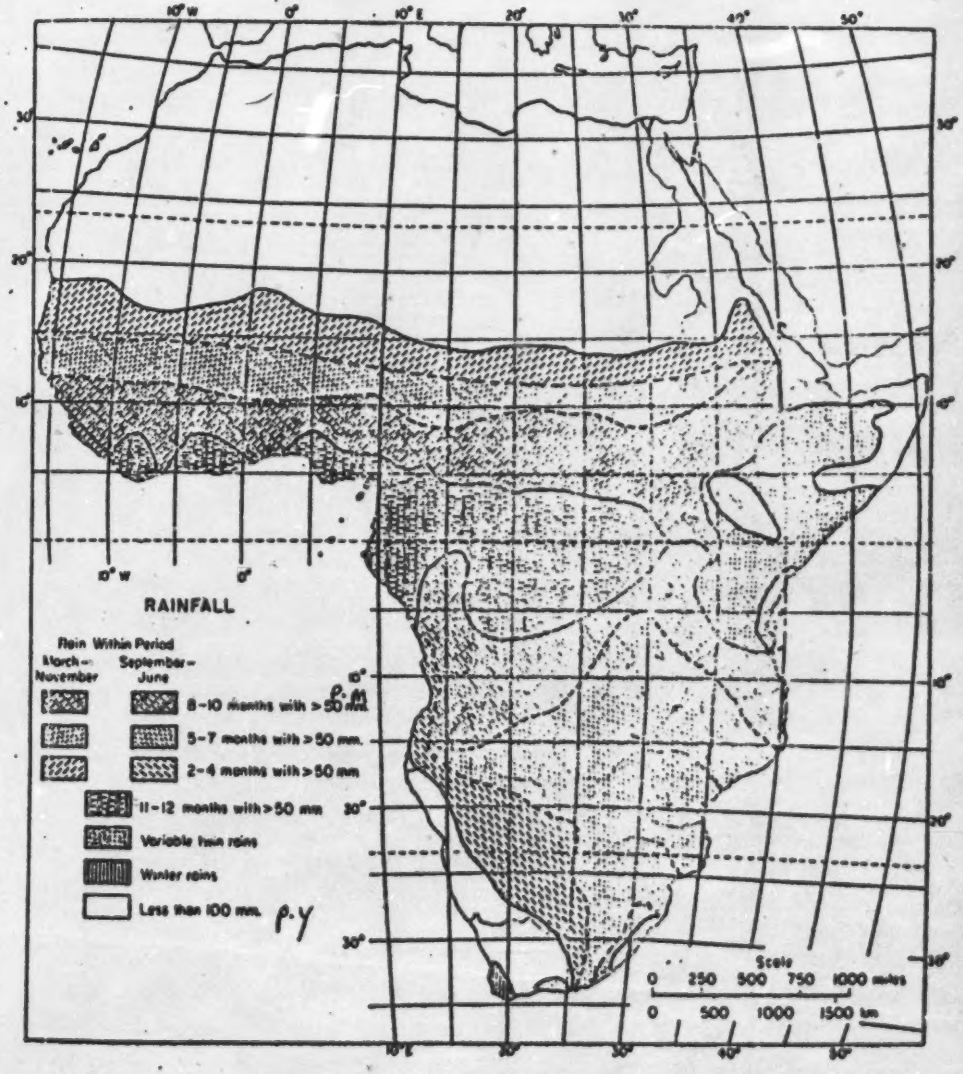


Fig. 7. Seasonal rainfall in Africa. Compiled by Dr. and Mrs Ward from Thompson (1965).

100 mm = 4 inches

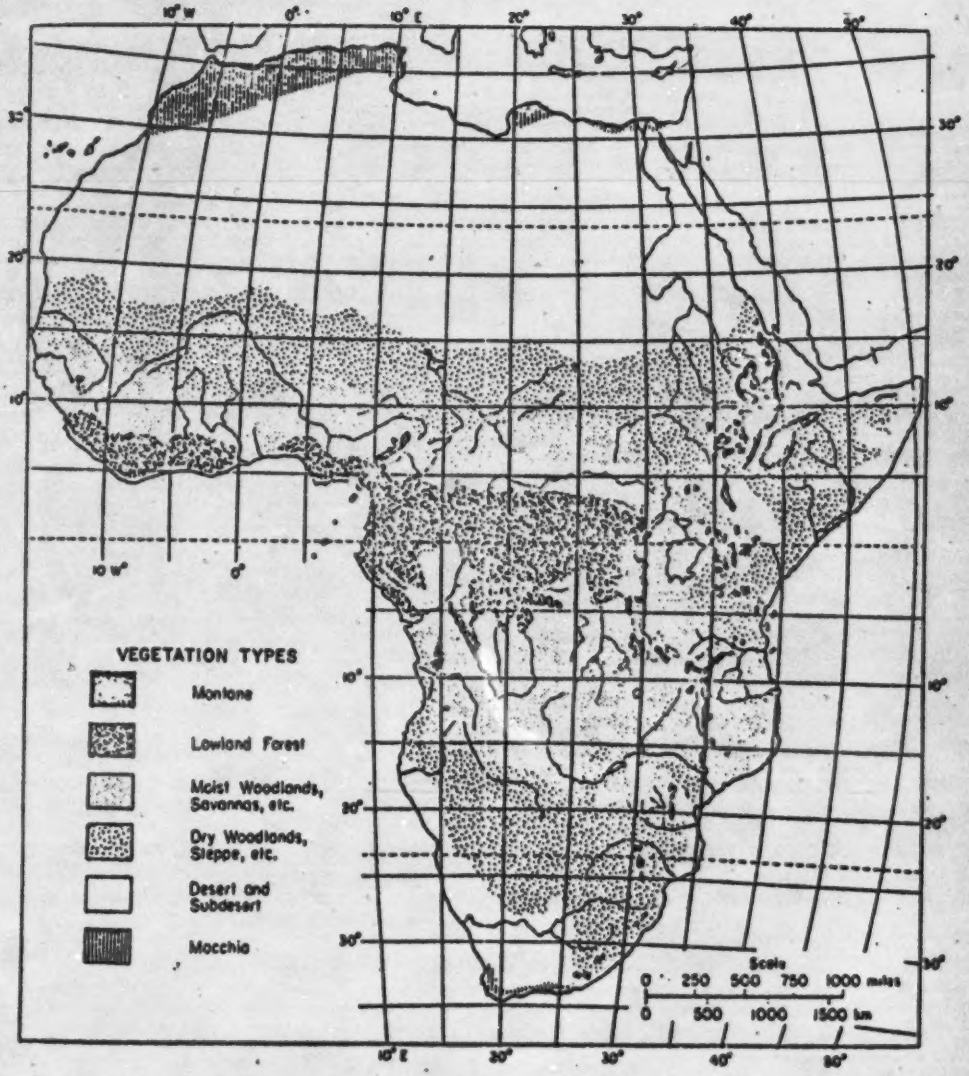
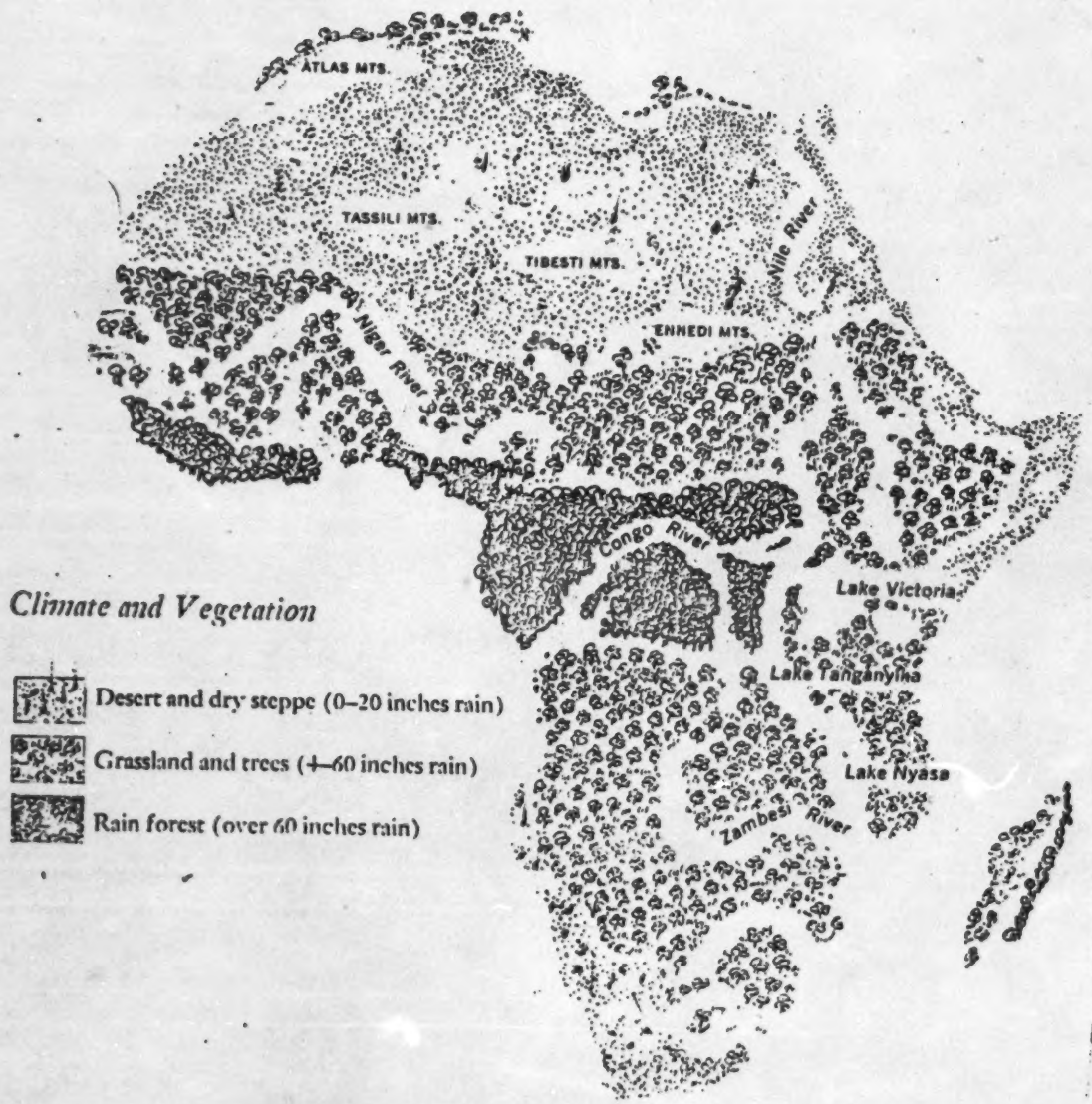


FIG. 8. Vegetation zones of Africa.



Peoples and Cultures of Africa by Elliott P. Skinner

Lesson Fourteen--

Political Division of Africa

The student will understand that there are many independent nations on the continent of Africa

MATERIALS

1. Current political map of Africa
2. List of current nation names
3. Teacher made map of continent
4. Map puzzle

INTEREST APPROACH

Ask the students if the different peoples each have their own nation? In what nation do we find the Igbos and Mandingos? (Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Guinea, etc.) Why do we have political divisions?

PROCEDURE

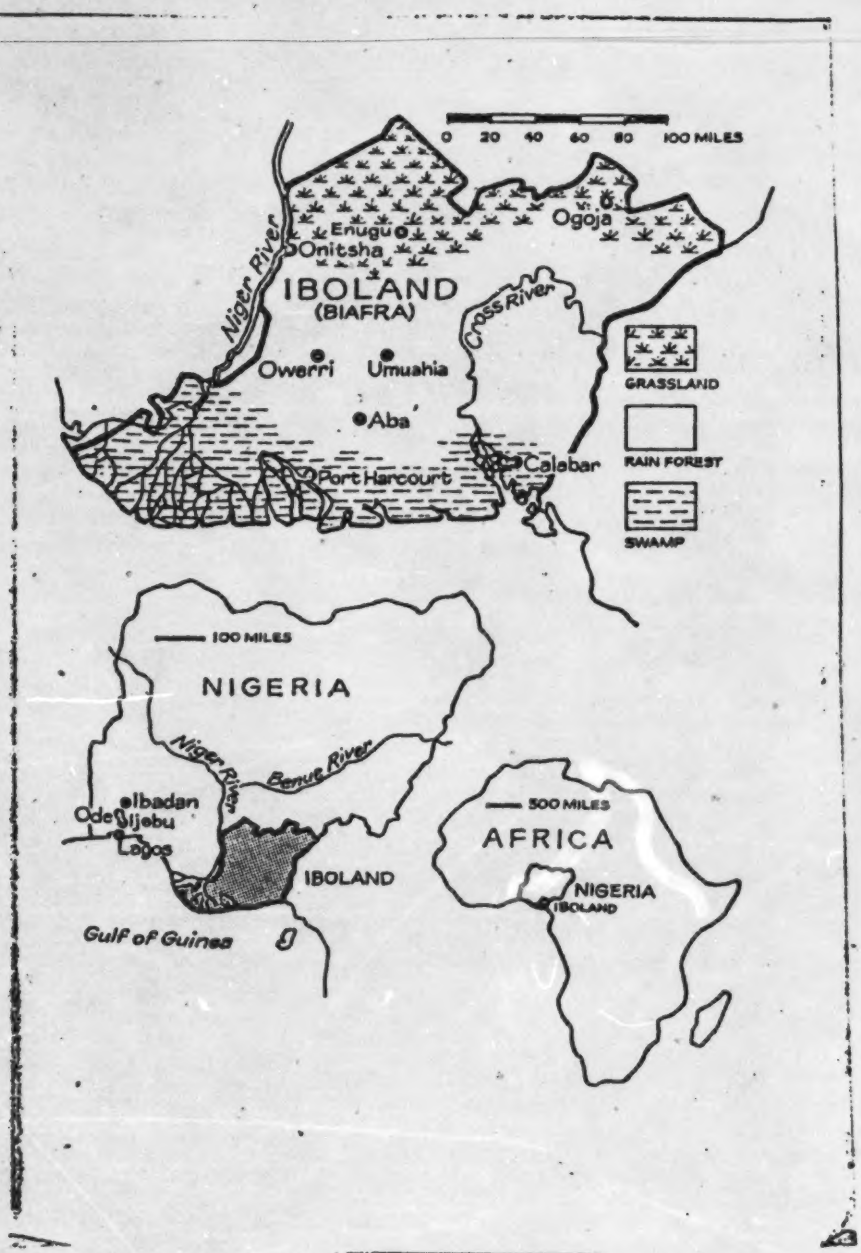
What are the reasons for political divisions?

Notice the name changes. Why is that?

On a large map go over the name of the countries, the rivers, and capitals.

Assign the work sheet requiring placing each contry's name, its capital, major cities and rivers to be written in by each student.

Have a large map of Africa cut into puzzle pieces by country on the task table for students to assemble have them race against the clock.



World Regional Geography p.194

AFRICA

AFRICA
SLEEPY GIANT
YOU'VE BEEN RESTING AWHILE
NOW I SEE THE THUNDER
AND THE LIGHTNING IN
YOUR SMILE

NOW I SEE THE STORMCLOUDS
IN YOUR WAKING EYES:

THE THUNDER

THE WONDER

AND THE NEW SURPRISE

YOUR EVERY STEP REVEALS
THE NEW STRIDE IN YOUR THIGHS.

American poet
LANGSTON HUGHES

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The following materials are all available free of charge from:

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1208 West California
Urbana, Illinois 61801

Slide Sets

African Ecology, 37 slides. A survey across Africa from Senegal on the west coast to Kenya on the east coast.

Children in East and West Africa, 32 slides. Typical activities of children at home, school, play.

Cloth-making in Sierra Leone, 32 slides. Processes of making tie-dye and wax stamped designs.

Houses in Western and Southern Africa, 44 slides. Brief survey of the diversity of rural and urban housing in five African countries.

The Oil Palm Tree in West African Society, 25 slides. Interesting story of the palm tree and its importance in society as the provide of oil, wine, and other products. Sierra Leone setting.

Rice Farming in Sierra Leone, 54 slides. Upland farming with hand tools and mechanized swamp farming on a demonstration project.

West African Dress, 40 slides. Different methods of making, decorating, and wearing cloth.

Handouts

African Recipes (from Nigeria and Sierra Leone)

Body Ritual among the Nacirema

Folk Tales from Sierra Leone

The Kola Nut in Traditional Igbo Society of Nigeria

Nigerian Folk Tales Told by Peter Asun

The Palm Tree in West African Society

A study of Five African Folktales

Understanding African Folklore

Film

Benin Kingship Ritual. 30 minutes, color. Detailed sequences of rituals for the Oba of Benin during the Igwe Festival in the Mid-West State, Nigeria.

Research project for scrapbook

The student will use reference material and library facilities to acquire facts about a country.

Each student will chose one African country; he will do a brief report on it giving the following facts:

1. Political map showing major cities, rivers, neighboring countries, sea ports.
2. Vegetation map and climate map.
3. Population map showing people groups in the country.
4. Brief review of the colonial experience.
5. Current leaders: who they are, their education, ldeadership experience, their apparent aims for their country.
6. Any news articles available.

Alternate activity

Make a travel poster and travel brochure about your country to bring in tourist trade. Include travel information, costs, type of clothing one might need. Passport requirements. Medical precautions.